

The Author of a Silver Tale

by Opal Soul

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Summary: Alternate Reality. Serena is a successful designer and romance author who loves to write "silver tales." [No hentai!] Now if only romance would fly her way...

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>Chapter One
By: Opal Soul

>Disclaimer: Do you *think* I'm talented enough to own Sailor Moon?

> Serena felt her smile slip but ignored the caution whispering furiously in the hidden recesses of her heart. "It's ironic, isn't it?" she said, a rare bitterness in her voice and even in the half-smile on her lips.
 "What do you mean?" Molly asked.

> "I write romance novels," Serena started. "When was the last time there was romance in my life?"
 "Why-- " Molly thought a moment. "What about Melvin?"

> "Oh, Molly," her best friend said, voice and face softening. "I-- I only dated him because I *felt* for him, but the *feeling* was not *love.* She glanced at Molly sidelong. "Besides," she stated casually, "my best friend loved him."
 Molly's pretty face flushed hotly. "Thank you," she said again.

> Serena's slender hand waved airily. "I love making other people happy," she admitted, not for the first or the last time.
 Molly smiled gratefully. "That's why everyone loves you, Serena. You're so incredibly sweet. You've got to be one of the sweetest people ever."

> Serena's face flushed with gratitude and pleasure at the compliment. Then, seeming to remember the original topic, she sighed. "But-- no man will ever love me."
 Molly was startled. "But, Serena! Have you looked in the mirror lately?"

> "Of course I have," snapped Serena.
 "Well?" her best friend demanded. "What did you see?"

> "A skinny, short young girl with long, straight, boring blond hair and blue eyes. Pale face with no make-up. A nobody."
 "Well, I see a young woman rich with success in two jobs. I see a young woman with

enough courage and sweetness in her to adapt to any setting. I see a young woman whose natural beauty shines through and adds to the strength of physical beauty! I see the embodiment of a romantic heroine," Molly assessed.

> "You've been reading my novels," Serena accused.
 "Don't you like your work?" Molly asked, surprised.

> "I guess, but--"
 "What do you mean, but?"

> "Lately I've been thinking that the heroes don't suffer enough." Molly's face was puzzled. Serena explained her theory. "Granted I'm not a man but all the romance novels have *female* angst, *never* male."
 "Serena! I can't believe you're saying this!" Molly exclaimed.

> Serena's small face was wistful. "It's just that-- oh, for all the angst I have, I want to get back at males, a little," she admitted. "It's wicked, I know, but Molly-- oh Molly, you *know.*" Anguish filled the author's voice.
 "Yes, I do," was the only reply. > "I-- I never thought I'd turn bitter," Serena said.
 Molly smiled. "Writers can be different. You can be bitter in stories and absolutely sweet in reality. You can be romance itself in novels and--" She stopped.

> "Un-romanced in reality," Serena finished dully.
 "Serena, that's not what I meant," Molly apologized.

> "It's alright, Molly dear. The truth hurts. And Molly-- I have learned that lesson well."

> "Hey sweetie! How are you?"
 Serena smiled without looking up. "I'm alright, Lita."

> Lita's voice was disappointed. "Aww! How'd you know it was me?"
 "Dear," Serena explained, "you're the only one who calls everyone a sweetie."

> Lita looked uncomfortable. "I do *not* call everyone a sweetie!"
 Serena laughed, pushing back her blond bangs. "I know, Lita." Slyly she looked under her eyelashes at her friend. "You call *Ken* a sweetiepie."

> "I--" Lita's voice died down and she blushed a bright red. "Well," she tried, "doesn't Mina call everyone a sweetie too?"
 "No," Serena analyzed professionally. "*Her* thing is a honey."

> "Amy?"
 The blond held back a chortle of laughter, barely successfully. "Amy! She's so shy she blushed for a year when we told her to use our first names!"

> "Raye?" Lita suggested.
 "Raye's got too much passion and realism in her to resort to frivolous nicknames," Serena said primly.

> "Oh?" Lita's sleek eyebrow rose skeptically, green eyes sparkling with laughter. "I seem to remember . . . hmm, doesn't she have a nickname for *you,* sweetie?"
 Blue eyes dropped. "Umm."

> "As in . . . Meatball Head?"
 The bomb dropped. "Umm," the blond started. "Umm."

> "What's the matter, sweetie?" teased Lita. "No brains in that meatball?"
 Serena smiled weakly. "Lita," she warned good-naturedly. A small hand tucked a strand of blond hair behind a delicate ear. "I'm kind of busy," she said.

> Lita's pleasant face changed, became more serious. "Oh, right. Well-- me and the girls wanted to get together tomorrow afternoon at three for a shopping trip. Game?"
 Oceanic eyes lit up. "Of course! You know me-- the shopaholic!"

> Lita laughed, slapping Serena's desk in an unlady-like manner. "Yeah! You and Molly! Oh yeah--" Emerald eyes were thoughtful for a moment. "Call Molly and bring her too, okay?"
 Serena nodded. "I--"

> "Oh shit!" Lita exclaimed, looking at her watch. Serena winced; she

never liked profanity but Lita was the outspoken one of her close friends. "I'm late! I gotta meet Ken!" She ignored Serena's wink. "Love ya, sweetie! Ja ne!"
"You too, Lita dear!" Serena called. Shaking her head as the brown ponytail bounded out of sight, she returned to the drawings and floor plans in front of her.

>
 "Meatball head! Late again?"

> Serena grimaced, annoyed, but managed to keep her temper down. "I'm not late, Pyro!" she snapped. "It's only-- " She checked her slender silver watch. "-- six forty-seven?"
The dark-haired woman lunged for her wrist. "Serena!" Raye scolded. "Your watch is broken!"

> Serena turned red. "Oh."
"You've been working too much, honey," a sweet and amazingly high voice said.

> Serena sighed, fist reaching up to rub an eye. "I guess so," she allowed. "But I've got to finish for the deadline! The boss-- "
"Honey, I'm *dating* your boss," Mina said reproachfully. "I'll speak to Andrew about this," she muttered. "Honey, you look ex-hausted." Mina had a tendency to lapse into actress-limbo, a habit from her adolescent years.

> "It's alright," Serena insisted. "I'll be fine."
"But Serena," Molly said, "you really should be resting."

> "Do you want to go home now?" Amy asked. "If you're tired you should be at home, resting."
"I'm not really tired," Serena tried to say. "It's just-- my new novel. It's driving me insane; it won't write itself."

> "Oh? Is that it? I'll help you proofread, if you want," Amy offered.
Serena sweatdropped. "Umm. Thanks, Amy, I'll remember that."

> "You guys," Lita interrupted. "I know we haven't seen Serena for a while and it's a great time to play Twenty-Questions, *but* we did come here to shop, you know."
A light ignited in Mina's eyes. "Well, what are we waiting for?" She flashed a smile, as well as five credit cards. She ignored the sweatdrops appearing on everyone's foreheads. "Andrew's *generous,*" she said exaggeratedly. "Let's go, honey."

>
 "How do you think this looks on me?" Raye asked, twirling in front of the mirror.

> "Got a hot date with Chad, sweetie?"
Suddenly the reason for Raye's nickname, The Pyro, became evident. Violet eyes flashed dangerously, igniting fire. "WHAT'S IT TO YOU?" she shouted.

> "Nothing, dear," Serena reassured her friend. "Lita meant nothing." She smiled brightly. "We were just wondering, that's all-- when is he going to pop the question anyhow?"
Raye's eyes lost their fire and her lips turned angelic. "Soon, I hope," she sighed dreamily. "I was hoping tonight, and I hope to look extra-nice for him, and I hope he notices because he never does, and I hope if he gets me a ring that it's not something ugly like an emerald because I wanted a ruby, and I hope we get married in June or July, and I hope-- what?" Raye broke off, annoyed at the five staring faces.

> "Umm," Molly voiced her opinion.
"I'm with you, honey," Mina agreed in her high voice.

> "Was it something I said?" Raye asked, bewildered.
"No, dear," Serena said, once again the peacemaker. "And to get back to the original question, Raye dear, I think the dress looks stunning. Although-- " She pursed her lips together. "I think . . . green is not your color. Go with the red print."

> "You think so?" Raye wanted to know. "I mean, please, I don't know-- " Raye was clearly flustered, a rare occurrence.
"Honey," Mina soothed, "red is where it's *at* for you."

> "Well, if you say so," Raye assented. "Red it is."

> "Serena, aren't you going to buy anything?" Amy asked.
She

sighed. "Well, I don't know," she fidgeted. "I have no-one to appreciate me if I *do* buy a new dress," she complained.
> Amy smiled kindly, putting an arm around her friend. "Oh Serena, I know how you feel, really I do. But-- I'm going to throw your own advice back at you, okay? Lighten up! You can live without a man!"
"What do you think I'm doing now, dear?" Serena demanded.

> Amy blushed, shy as always. "What I meant was, Serena," she tried, "buy a dress to make yourself happy, not a man."
"Yeah, sweetie," Lita came up. "And maybe the man will walk right into your life," she winked.

> Serena laughed. "Alright, alright, I'll get something for myself. My last paycheck just came, anyway."
"Get something white," Lita suggested. "You always look so pretty in white."

> "But then it's so-- bridal," Serena pointed out. "I hate being reminded of the fact that I'm an old maid."
"As long as it's pastel," Amy perused. "You look nice in dark colors too, Serena, but pastel really brings out the soft femininity in your character."

> "Well-- "
"If you can't make up your mind," Molly interrupted, "just try everything on! Who says you *have* to buy anything?"

> Serena disappeared amid a flurry of clucking girls, all pulling her toward the dressing room.

> "Mr. Chiba," a female voice said timidly. "Mr. Furuhata is here to see you now."
"Show him in," Darien said gruffly. He didn't look up from his computer screen. "Come on, Michelle, hurry on and show him in!"

> The green-haired secretary looked longingly at her handsome boss and called, "Mr. Furuhata, Mr. Chiba will see you in his office. Please come in."
"Mr. Chiba." Andrew stood uncomfortably in the door frame, playing with his hat.

> "Just a minute," the same gruff voice said. "I'm almost finished. Have a seat though, Mr. Furuhata, and you can tell Michelle to make you coffee."
"Umm. Thank you." Andrew took the opportunity to study the office. Dark, earthy colors graced the office of the President of Chiba Corporations. With his decorator's eye, Andrew admitted the man had taste. Black leather sofas stretched on the side of the office, tanned leather pillows fluffed against them. A forest green throw was casually flung on the back of the executive black leather chair, which Darien now occupied. Andrew didn't understand why his company had been commissioned to re-decorate the Chiba Corporations building. The place was depressing, of course, but pleasantly masculine and professional.

> "Mr. Furuhata," Darien began formally, "will you take the job?"
Andrew shrugged. "I have no objections, of course, Mr. Chiba."

> "Good," Darien said curtly. "Your team of designers can then begin as soon as possible."
"Mr. Chiba," Andrew ventured, "if you don't mind-- why is it so necessary? Your office is flawlessly adorned."

> Darien's midnight eyes flashed. "Thank you, Mr. Furuhata, but-- "
"Please. Call me Andrew," he offered in a moment of insanity.

> "Andrew, then," Darien continued. "I thank you for your compliment, Andrew, and I admit I like my office, but my girlfriend has other ideas."
"Ahhh," Andrew nodded. "Girlfriends tend to be like that."

> "So you understand," Darien said, opening up a little. "Rita insists on the rest of the building brightening up, if not my office." He chuckled a little. "I have a feeling it's going to cost me."
Andrew smiled sympathetically. "Luckily my girlfriend agrees with my tastes."

> "No kidding?" Darien smiled back. Somehow Andrew's smile was catching. "Rita was telling me the other day she wanted our house redone."
 "Furuhata Designers at your service!" Andrew joked.

> "I was serious," Darien said. "If you do a good job on this, I want you to redecorate my house as well."
 "Mr. Chiba, I don't know what to say," Andrew began, running his fingers through his blondish-brown hair.

> "Darien, please," the President said. "And say you'll take the job."
 "I'll take the job, of course," Andrew said. "I just can't believe you'd want to-- I mean, I-- "

> "As long as Serena-- what was her last name? As long as Serena Tsukino does the designing," Darien interjected.
 Andrew was a little surprised. "My company has many wonderful designers," he objected. "Why Serena?"

> Darien grimaced. "Rita's got an obsession with her work," he said.
 "Many people do," Andrew nodded.

> "Yes, well," Darien allowed. "Umm." He raised his dark head and glanced at the clear-cut clock on his desk. "Wish I could talk longer to you, Andrew, but I need to get to a meeting."
 Andrew rose to go. "It's been a pleasure, Darien," Andrew said. "I hope we meet again."

>
 "Serena, there you are," Andrew said, coming up behind his employee.

> "Andrew!" Serena exclaimed happily, holding her arms up for a hug. He complied, laughing. "You're back early!"
 "Serena," her boss said reproachfully. "Since when do I report to you?" There was a twinkle of humor in his green eyes.

> "Since you were nine," Serena retorted.
 "And you six," Andrew chuckled. He looked fondly at his childhood friend. Serena was his second sister, so to speak. Andrew considered himself to be her protector and through both their lives he had fulfilled his role to the hilt, fighting off bullies and lecturing any who would dare date his precious little sister.

> Serena laughed now as well, wrapping her arms tightly around his waist. "So? What happened, Andrew?"
 Andrew became serious once more. "Darien Chiba commissioned us to do not only his entire office building but his house as well!"

> "Andrew!" Serena squealed, jumping up and down excitedly. Unfortunately, her arms were still around Andrew and he was being very painfully squeezed.
 "Umm," Andrew started. "Serena, please let go of me."

> "Sorry," she giggled. Serena released her friend and stepped back sheepishly.
 Andrew looked at her strangely, wondering at the sudden change of moods. "And-- Darien wants *you* to design everything."

> "Me?" she yelped.
 Andrew winced. "Yes, you, Serena."

> "Wow!" Serena said. "I'll get right to it." She glanced at her friend slyly. "I know how important this is to you, Andrew dear, and Mina will be so happy-- "
 At the mention of his girlfriend's name, Andrew perked up. "Mina?"

> "Of course, Andrew dear," Serena said. "Then you can finally ask her to marry you."
 Andrew's face flushed hotly. "Serena? How'd you know?"

> Serena smiled innocently. "You told me yourself, silly."
 "I did not!" Andrew protested. "I never told you-- Serena? You-- did you read my e-mail, again?"

> Serena sweatdropped and inched her way to the door. "Brother dear," she started, "I think-- I hear the phone ringing." She made her escape.

> It was night. Serena Tsukino looked out the huge window of her

bedroom. She was seated on the plush pillows surrounding the window frame. The moon shone brightly in the velvety sky, inspiring the young blond. Glancing at her laptop, her fingers tap-danced on the keyboard as she wove another silver tale.
 'Melissa turned reluctantly to the sound of his voice. She knew it was him-- no one but he had a voice that struck chords into the still, cold night air. Even in the dank darkness she could see his face, trace his features with her heart. Desperately she tried to cloak herself with dignity and pride, tried to make her own voice cold and distant, tried to keep her love inside. She couldn't bear to let him break down her walls and invade her heart completely. "What are you doing here, Grant?" she asked, coldly.

> 'Grant's heart shuddered at the ice hanging in the room. "Melissa," he tried, "I love you. Surely you know that." He was unable to restrain himself; his hand descended on her small shoulder and he brought her fiercely against his chest, burying his handsome and anguished face into her tantalizingly soft fiery hair.'
 Serena looked again at the moon. She sighed, clicking 'save' on her computer. Enough writing for tonight, she thought to herself. The moon winked at her, soft beams caressing her blond tresses.

> Gazing at the moon, Serena broke down. I'm so alone, she thought sadly. So desperately alone.
 At first it had only been Raye. Raye Hino, the fiery-tempered priestess at the Cherry Hill Temple, had sent every-one of her close friends an e-mail telling them she was dating Chad Hakiruchi. Chad was an aspiring singer who had worked at her grandfather's temple years ago. Now he had come back, bringing a new maturity, a romantic song, a bouquet of roses, and a love for Raye.

> Then it had been Molly. Serena had dated Melvin Durokondi several times since the man had had a crush on her since junior high. Molly Hamilton, the owner of a well-to-do jewelry store, was Serena's best friend and had secretly confided that she liked Melvin. Serena had stepped graciously aside, setting them up since she had never truly harbored any true attraction to Melvin. No-one seemed to understand the pretty New Yorker's love for the nerdy computer programmer.
 Mina had been soon to follow. Mina Aino was an ex-actress. In her teen years she had been very popular and she lived well on her millions. Serena and Mina had met by chance in junior high. Mina was lonely; Serena extended a loving hand; Mina was inducted into the group of friends. She had a crush on Serena's best friend at the time, an older man named Andrew Furuhata. Mina had been afraid that Serena's and Andrew's friendship had deepened-- they certainly displayed their affection quite publicly. Serena had assured her they felt nothing for each other and dropped several hints to Andrew, who was by then Serena's boss and the owner of Furuhata Designers.

> Lita had flirted with many men before Ken. Lita Larson was a famous cook; she appeared on television in her own show. Her heart had been broken in high school by a man named Freddie Something-or-other-- the last name had long since been forgotten. Afterwards she had toyed with men, leaving many unhappy. After her most recent break-up, her best friend Ken Ottawa had comforted her yet again. Looking into his sincere eyes, she found not only comfort but-- love. Confronted, Ken had stammered and blushed and admitted-- Lita, impulsive, bold Lita had kissed him soundly.
 A month ago Amy had found someone of her own. Amy Mizuno was a genius in all respects of the word. She was shy to the core and afraid of men. She had met Greg Matthews in junior high, fallen for him, and he had left within a week. Recently she had met Greg again at a convention for physicists and they had picked up where they left off.

> Serena Tsukino, single young woman of 24, was an endangered

species.

> "Mr. Chiba," his secretary announced, "Mr. Furuhata and Miss Tsukino are here to see you now."
 Darien's head snapped up at Furuhata. Yes, he remembered Andrew. "Show them in, Michelle," he said, less gruffly than usual. He flashed her a smile that left her insides melting. "Please."

> Andrew came in first. "Darien, we're ready to start," he said.
 Serena entered the room timidly. "Mr. Chiba?" she asked, clearly in awe.

> Darien barely glanced at the girl. "Andrew, I hope your designer has a price ready."
 "Of course," Andrew said smugly. Nudging the girl beside him, he said, "Go on, Serena."

> "Mr. Chiba," Serena began formally, much in the manner Darien usually conducted business matters. Instinctively he straightened and glanced at her. Serena was clothed in a pale, dusky yellow business-suit with matching pumps. Her hair was, as always, in her unique hairstyle-- an artist's hairstyle. Yes, only an artist in all senses of the word could pull it off. Blond hair swept up into two buns on either side of her head, long pigtails streaming behind her. A beautiful face devoid of make-up. Her hands were gesturing at him. He snapped awake once more.
 "Yes?" Darien growled.

> Serena looked at him strangely and made a face at Andrew. "Umm. Mr. Chiba-- "
 "Darien, please," the President growled.

> "Right. Darien, did you have a theme in mind? I can adapt," Serena suggested.
 Darien's face relaxed. "Well, you'd have to ask my girlfriend," he admitted. "I like my office the way it is."

> "So do I," Serena complimented appreciatively. "It suits your character well."
 "My-- character?" Darien asked. "What do you know of my character?"

> The young woman turned to stare at him. The look thrilled him. "Darien, I am an author. I read people, and I can read you."
 "Oh?" He raised a dark eyebrow skeptically.

> "Yes, I can," she said calmly.
 "Umm," Andrew coughed. "Can we get back to the topic at hand?"

> Darien cleared his throat. "Of course, Andrew. Umm. Well, Rita has a thing for spring," he ventured.
 Serena pursed her lips together. "Darien. Umm. I hardly think spring has anything to do with-- computers and technology." She seemed amused.

> "That's what I told her," Darien complained. "But she won't listen to me."
 "Bring her in," Serena suggested. "If she talks to me-- Andrew told me she loved my work-- maybe she'll relent. Then I'll mold the rest of the building to look more-- like this room."

> Darien was relieved. "That's great," he said. "If you can come back tomorrow I'm sure she'll be here."
 Andrew nodded. "There's no problem," he asserted.

> Darien nodded, then turned back to Serena. "So do you have any ideas for-- umm. For-- this building?"
 Serena bent slightly to hold up a tan portfolio. "It's all in here," she said. "If you would like to take a look-- "

> Darien nodded impatiently, then took the folder from the slim woman in front of him. Quickly he glanced at the sketches.
 He stopped at one particular drawing. It was a pencil sketch of a woman-- a beautiful woman bearing an odd resemblance to the woman in the room. She had the same ridiculous and charming hairstyle and looked about as delicate. Hair streamed behind her as she gazed at the moon. The moon had been enlarged and it almost glowed on the paper. In her small hands was clasped a star-shaped locket. Tears streamed down her face and Darien could almost hear the sad words drop from her lips. "My only love," he imagined her saying. To whom? Why was this picture in this portfolio?

> "Umm," Darien said, turning to the pair of designers eyeing him. "Serena, what is this?"
 Her face flushed hotly. "Umm," she tried to explain. "I drew that last night. I guess I put it in there by accident. Sorry." She made a grab for the picture, but Darien held it out of reach.

> "It's beautiful," he said. "Do you mind if I keep it?"
 "Keep-- that?" she asked incredulously. "I mean, I don't know, I-- "

> "It's nice," Darien said lamely. "I'm willing to pay you for it; I know my girlfriend would love to have this in our house."
 Serena smiled. "Well, as a romance novelist I'll just let you have it since it will make both of you happy." She winked at him.

> Darien caught his breath in his chest. Fascinated, he watched her sooty eyelashes work up and down, closing over luscious blue eyes. He shook his head to clear it. "Thank you, Serena," he said.

> Serena sighed at her window. She was there again, keeping her vigil. "And then," she confided to the moon, "he asked me for it!" She laughed quietly, as if afraid to disturb the night's peace. "You know, Moon," she continued, "I feel as though I could tell you anything. It's like-- you are a . . . part of me." Large sapphire eyes gazed heavenward. "It-- I can't explain it." She clutched the windowsill. "But I do have some questions," she said childishly. "Since you're the moon and the moon sees all-- Moon, what's my future? Am I to stay alone forever? I know it's selfish of me when I've got so much already, but-- I don't feel complete. I should just be happy, I know, Moon, and I am but-- somehow it's not enough. What's missing?" She giggled, pretending to hear a reply. "I know it's love, but-- when is it going to come? Who is it? I won't complain if I have to wait, but Moon, I'd really prefer not to wait until I'm in a nursing home."
 Receiving no answer, she bowed her head and started to get up and back to bed. She glanced one more time at the dark sky. "I guess you can't tell me, Moon, and I guess you can't either, God, so-- I guess it's just another silver tale."

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>
Well? What did you guys think? I know I made Serena kind of sappy, but I'm a romantic sap myself. What can I say? And I didn't know the Japanese last names of some of the characters so I took the liberty to make them up. I know, shameful. Sorry, but it's my fanfic anyway! I'm totally new in the world of Fanfic on the Net. This is the *first* one I've posted. I'd appreciate feedback of any kind. You can write to me at spots_goil@juno.com OR Dariens_Bunny@sailormoon.com, but I'd prefer the Juno 'cause I don't check the Sailor Moon one very often. ^_^ Flames welcome, by the way.

>Thanks to: my wonderful spell-check.
"If I am a jewel, as a dear friend once flirtatiously dubbed me, I am an opal. Fiery ice swirling in the milk-white of innocence. Passion and compassion. Myself to the core." Surprisingly enough, I wrote that. It's just to clarify any questions on my strange pen-name.

> <p><p>

End
file.